

Kaptur's effort means \$30 million boost to 180th.

Congresswoman Kaptur today announced a \$30 million boost to efforts to upgrade and replace engines at the Toledo-based 180th Air National Guard Fighter Wing.

"This is an investment in the future of the 180th in Toledo as the most modern fighter wing in America," said Congresswoman Kaptur, a member of the influential House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee. The funding was approved by the Subcommittee this morning in its markup and approval of the Fiscal Year 2010 defense appropriations bill.

Due to intermittent efforts by the Department of Defense to downsize bases, a process known at the Base Realignment and Closure process (BRAC), Kaptur made fully funding all engine replacements at the base in Fiscal Year 2010 her top committee priority this year.

"Bringing the base to full operational preparedness with the most up to date engines, is an investment in the base's competitiveness in future BRAC processes," said Kaptur.

The funding will complete installation of 18 engines in F-16 fighter jets. Jets in the 180th Fighter Wing were deployed in the Iraq War in 2005 and 2007. Personnel from the Fighter Wing continue to rotate on missions in the current wars in the Middle East.

Kaptur said the engine upgrade program provides a cost-effective method of upgrading fighter performance at a fraction of the cost of new aircraft. It also provides a 20 percent improvement in jet thrust and improved performance. This new investment will complete engine replacement process years ahead of schedule and augments a previously slow moving effort, hampered by a lack of funding. The new Pratt & Whitney 229 engines provide immediate improved combat capability to the F-16s existing Block 42 engines. The engines alone cost approximately \$5.5 million each. Kaptur had previously secured incremental funding for the engine program of about \$12 million a year in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

"The 180th Toledo Fighter Wing is a model unit for Air National Guard modernization. It is the most modern base in Ohio. With forward thinking Guard leadership, it has been an honor to assist the unit in its important efforts to modernize, and to steadily improve its operational capabilities, delivering \$80 million in base investments over the last ten years," said Kaptur.

The 180th Fighter Wing's primary mission is to train and stand ready with units for active duty in the event of a national emergency or war. The unit consists of several support functions, including security forces, engineering, communications, aircraft maintenance, food services, transportation, human resources and medics. More than 1,000 people are employed by the unit, which is estimated to contribute \$85 million in payroll and local purchases to the local economy annually.

Congresswoman Kaptur discusses the importance of the 180th Flghter Wing to our community.

